

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A sheet-processing apparatus comprising:

a cutting apparatus which slits a long sheet member into a plurality of narrower strips;

a chopping apparatus which chops the strips with a predetermined spacing, for forming pluralities of sheets;

a stacking apparatus which piles up a predetermined number of the sheets for each strip, for forming sheet sheaves, the stacking apparatus including an alignment section that transports the sheet sheaves in guide channels in a first direction while opening up a predetermined distance therebetween in a second direction, substantially perpendicular to the first direction;

a transport apparatus including a transport section which transports the sheet sheaves in the second direction while opening up a predetermined distance therebetween ~~in guide channels in the second direction;~~ and

a packing apparatus which packs the sheet sheaves.
2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising an application apparatus which applies a cover sheet to at least one of an upper face and a lower face of each sheet sheaf.
3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the application apparatus comprises:

a pair of cover sheet application devices which are each capable of applying a cover sheet to a face of the each sheet sheaf that is disposed at a vertical direction upper side of the sheet sheaf; and

an inversion apparatus provided between the cover sheet application devices, which is capable of inverting the sheet sheaf.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the inversion apparatus comprises at least one gripping portion capable of pushing against upper and lower faces of the sheet sheaf and disengageably gripping the sheet sheaf.

5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the sheet sheaf is inverted by the gripping portion rotating about an axial line which extends in a direction intersecting a direction of transport of the sheet sheaves.

6. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the transport apparatus further comprises:

~~a transport section which transports the sheet sheaves, substantially in a row, in a first direction while opening up the predetermined spacing therebetween; and~~

a transfer section at a predetermined point on a transport path of the transport section, which changes a transport direction of the sheet sheaves from the ~~first~~ second direction to a ~~second~~ the first direction, ~~which substantially intersects the first direction~~, without altering a state of orientation of each sheet sheaf.

7. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said stacking apparatus includes a plurality of sheet-receiving portions, each sheet-receiving

portion stacking the predetermined number of the sheets for each strip, which are fed therein in a first direction, for forming the sheet sheaves, each sheet being inclined in the plurality of sheet-receiving portions, and the plurality of sheet-receiving portions are disposed substantially in a row in ~~[[a]]~~ the second direction, ~~which is substantially perpendicular to the first direction, in plan view,~~ and said transport apparatus includes a transfer section that transports the sheet sheaves which are formed at each sheet-receiving portion in ~~a transport~~ the second direction ~~which is substantially parallel to the first direction.~~

8. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein each sheet-receiving portion forms the sheet sheaf in which each sheet is inclined to one side in the first direction and is also inclined to one side in the second direction.

9. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein each sheet-receiving portion comprises a pair of guide plates on which the sheet sheaf is formed.

10. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein each sheet-receiving portion comprises a standing wall capable of abutting against and aligning a side face of the sheet sheaf at one side in the second direction.

11. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein each sheet-receiving portion comprises a corresponding stopping plate portion capable of abutting against and aligning a side face of the sheet sheaf at one side in the first direction.

12. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the stopping plate portions are all structured by a single stopping plate.

13. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the stopping plate is movable between an abutting position, at which abutting against the sheet sheaves of all the sheet-receiving portions is possible, and a withdrawn position, at which this abutting does not occur and the stopping plate does not obstruct transport of the sheet sheaves by the transport section.

14. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim ~~[[7]]~~ 1, wherein the ~~transport~~ alignment section comprises a pushing movement apparatus capable of pushing the sheet sheaves of all the sheet-receiving portions for moving the sheet sheaves in parallel in the ~~transport~~ first direction.

15. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim ~~[[7]]~~ 1, wherein the ~~transport~~ alignment section comprises a plurality of guide portions, each guide portion receiving the seat sheaf from the corresponding sheet-receiving portion and guiding the sheet sheaf in the ~~transport~~ first direction.

16. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein each guide portion comprises a pair of guide members which slide against and guide the sheet sheaf, the guide members being inclined to a ~~transport~~ first direction downstream side and also inclined to one side in ~~a direction substantially perpendicular to the transport~~ the first direction.

17. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the inclination to the one side in the second direction ~~substantially perpendicular to the transport direction~~ eases off in accordance with progress toward the ~~transport~~ first direction downstream side.

18. (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein said transport ~~apparatus~~ section includes a transport belt for transporting the sheet sheaves, which is disposed at an outer side, in the ~~transport~~ first direction, of the transport ~~apparatus~~ section, and a stopping member for positioning the sheet sheaves on the transport belt substantially in a row along a direction of progress of the belt.

19-20. (Canceled)

21. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) A sheet-processing apparatus comprising:
a cutting apparatus which slits a long sheet member into a plurality of narrower strips;
a chopping apparatus which chops the strips with a predetermined spacing, for forming pluralities of sheets;

a stacking apparatus which piles up a predetermined number of the sheets for each strip, for forming sheet sheaves, the stacking apparatus including an alignment section that transports the sheet sheaves in guide channels while opening up a predetermined distance therebetween, said stacking apparatus includes a plurality of sheet-receiving portions, each sheet-receiving portion stacking the predetermined number of the sheets for each strip, which are fed therein in a

first direction, for forming the sheet sheaves, each sheet being inclined in the plurality of sheet-receiving portions, and the plurality of sheet-receiving portions are disposed substantially in a row in a second direction, which is substantially perpendicular to the first direction, in plan view;

~~a transfer section;~~

a transport apparatus, said transport apparatus including:

a transport section which transports the sheet sheaves in the second direction
while opening up a predetermined distance therebetween in the second direction; and

a transfer section which moves the plurality of sheet sheaves from said transport
section in the first direction; and

a packing apparatus which packs the sheet sheaves

wherein said stacking apparatus includes a plurality of sheet-receiving portions, each sheet-receiving portion stacking the predetermined number of the sheets for each strip, which are fed therein in a first direction, for forming the sheet sheaves, each sheet being inclined in the plurality of sheet-receiving portions, and the plurality of sheet-receiving portions are disposed substantially in a row in a second direction, which is substantially perpendicular to the first direction, in plan view, the transfer section moves the plurality of sheet sheaves in said second direction from said sheet receiving portions to said transport apparatus, and said transport apparatus transports the sheet sheaves which are formed at each sheet-receiving portion in a transport direction which is substantially parallel to the first direction.